



HEADQUARTERS
DELTA MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND
USAAG, IV CTZ, APO 96215
Office of the Deputy for CORDS



26 January 1970

Dear Dan:

This will, of necessity, be brief and to the point. I am in hot water up to my ears about Chau, principally with the No. 1 Ambassador. The No. 3 Ambassador is sympathetic, but essentially believes this is a battle I brought on myself and one I will have to fight. So be it and I may eventually have to leave over this issue. This, however, is not the important part of this letter.

As you are aware, the government, using every means of coercion possible, has acquired 102 signatures on a petition requesting removal of immunity from Chau and the other two deputies. By voice vote in the Assembly, they were barely able to muster 70 deputies who approved the basic investigating committee findings that Chau and the other two deputies had had dealings with Communists. (In Chau's case, the only dealings with Communists alleged is the series of meetings with his brother Hien.) The additional signatures were achieved by varying combinations of pressure and payoff. One deputy (one who did not sign) has reported that he received three telephone calls a day during the putsch to achieve the 102-signatures. The first phone call was from an individual who identified himself as a Communist thanking him for the continued support of the "Communist brothers" in the Assembly. A short while later, he would receive a call from a man who identified himself as an ARVN Ranger. This man would berate him for supporting the "Communist members" in the Assembly. He announced that his mother, father and brother had been killed by the Communists and that he (the ARVN Ranger) would "take care" of the deputy and his family if he did not stop supporting the Communists. A third phone call was received, usually for the wife, stating that it was understood the family needed some money and that 500,000 piasters would be made available when her husband signed the petition. Regardless of how it was done or how widespread was the practice, the common consensus among the Vietnamese is that loyal opposition to the government from elected Assembly members is no longer possible and that even the trappings of representative government are dead.

Chau, who sincerely fears for his life, has been in hiding for the past week and apparently is making plans to go to another country, probably Cambodia, to ask for political asylum. From there he hopes to make his way to Paris where he will be faced with the problem of earning a living while doing whatever it is he will be doing while he is there. None of this, of course, can take place without some unusual risk on Chau's part, but he feels he has no alternative but to take the risk. He expects to slip out of country some time between the 1st and 7th of February,